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PRADHAN DISCUSSES CBSE PAYMENT GATEWAY OVERHAUL WITH PSU BANKS

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan held detailed discussions with senior officials of SBI, Bank of Baroda, Canara Bank and Indian Bank

The meeting was held in the backdrop of concerns over the recent payment and technical issues faced by students during the CBSE post-result and re-evaluation processes. During the interaction, Pradhan asked the banks to assist the CBSE to establish a robust, reliable and student-friendly digital payment ecosystem, particularly for post-examination services

The banks were asked to work closely with CBSE to strengthen the payment gateway infrastructure through advanced technical safeguards

Pradhan tells officials to accord highest priority to this to ensure that students do not face technical glitches | **P11**

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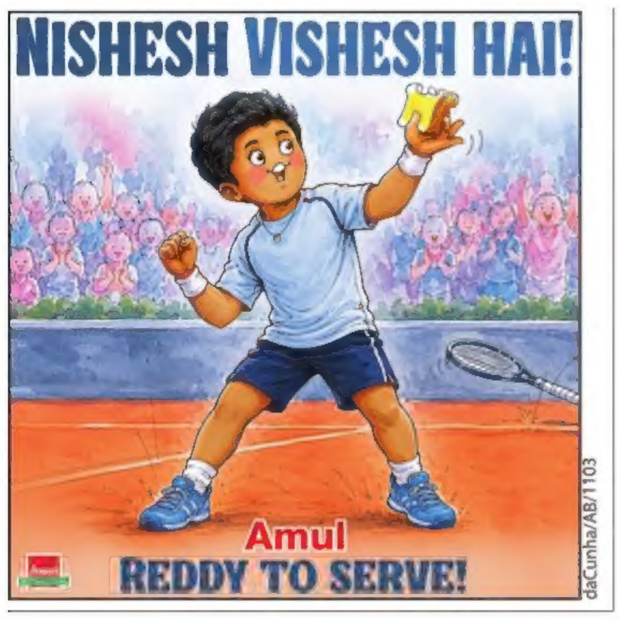


If not DKS: Who's in race

The Congress high command could go in for a complete makeover of the party in the state and appoint a young, dynamic leader with a clean image to lead the party in the 2028 assembly elections, sources said

Byre Gowda: Chart topper

The name of Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda is on the top, besides Minister for Large & Medium Industries and Infrastructure Development MB Patil. Both have a clean image and are known for their good work

> **Whatever you (media) were doing was only speculation. Today, the discussion was concentrated only on the upcoming RS elections and the Legislative Council elections of Karnataka**
>
> KC Venugopal, AICC gen secy

> **It (leadership change) is only speculation. (Cabinet reshuffle) did not come up for discussion**
> — Siddaramaiah, Karnataka Chief Minister

Siddu agrees to quit

But who will replace him, or when he will resign not yet decided; Siddu seeks meeting with governor on May 28, calls for CLP meet on May 29

PREETHA NAIR, BALA CHAUHAN, NAUSHAD BIJAPUR & DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @New Delhi/Bengaluru

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM D K Shivakumar with AICC General Secretary K C Venugopal after a meeting with the high command in New Delhi on Tuesday | PARVEEN NEGI

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah late on Tuesday night agreed to step down as chief minister, confirmed sources privy to the marathon meetings held earlier in the day in New Delhi. However, although Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar is the frontrunner for the post, no decision has been taken on who would succeed Siddaramaiah nor when he would resign as chief minister.

But sources said the chief minister has sought time to meet Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot at Lok Bhavan at 2 pm on May 28 and called for the Congress Legislature Party meeting the following day. AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal and AICC General Secretary in charge of Karnataka Randeep Singh Surjewala are scheduled to arrive in Bengaluru on Wednesday.

Sources informed *TNIE* that Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi asked Siddaramaiah to step down to resolve the prolonged tussle between him and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar. They said the chief minister agreed to step down after a late-evening huddle with MLAs supporting him.

Shivakumar had been insisting that the party high command hand over the CM post to him, based on an agreement of sharing power for two-and-a-half years that he is said to have struck with Siddaramaiah after the party came to power in Karnataka after the 2023 Assembly polls.

Speculation was rife about the leadership change since November 2025 when the half-way mark of the five-year CM's term was reached.

Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar were summoned on Monday to Delhi, where Rahul is said to have told the chief minister that the party wanted the transition to be smooth. At the meeting, Rahul offered a Rajya Sabha seat for Siddaramaiah to play a "larger role" at the national level, and the latter has sought time to respond to the party high command's suggestion, according to sources.

After marathon meetings spanned from 11.35 am to 6 pm, a visibly upset Siddaramaiah huddled with his coterie of cabinet colleagues at Karnataka Energy Minister KJ George's New Delhi residence and conveyed the high command's message to them. He is said to have agreed to step down after this meeting, sources said.

At the same time, Shivakumar and his supporters looked upbeat over the prospect of him becoming chief minister.

Siddaramaiah was carrying a letter of support from 100 party MLAs (Congress has 134 out of 224 seats in the Assembly) to convince the high command about the support he enjoyed from his legislators. **P4**

STEP AWAY FROM 'CUP NAMDU'

Royal Challengers Bengaluru captain Rajat Patidar drives while playing against Gujarat Titans at the Indian Premier League T20 first qualifier in Dharamsala on Tuesday. Batting first, RCB put up a massive 254 for 5 wickets on the board. GT were bundled out for 162 in 19.3 overs. With this win, RCB will move to the final which will be played in Ahmedabad on Sunday | PTI | **P19**

Demographic change under lens

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

THE government on Tuesday constituted a high-level committee to study how illegal infiltration and other factors lead to unnatural demographic changes across the country.

Chaired by Justice (Retd) Prakash Prabhakar Nawlekar, the panel's members include Census Commissioner Mritunjay Kumar Narayan, former IAS officer Durga Shankar Mishra, retired IPS officer Balaji Shrivastava and educationist Shamika Ravi.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said illegal infiltration and other reasons leading to unnatural demographic change is a very big challenge. The new panel is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement on August 15, 2025, to constitute a high-powered demography mission, he said.

Describing the issue as one that goes beyond population data, Shah said demographic change has direct implications for sovereignty, law and order, social structure and the preservation of tribal communities. He said the initiative reflects a proactive effort to protect the country's integrity and social fabric through "well-informed and decisive action".

The committee has been tasked with submitting its report within a year.

Quad sharpens Indo-Pacific focus, unveils new initiatives

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

THE Quad grouping sharpened its strategic focus on the Indo-Pacific on Tuesday as the foreign ministers of India, the US, Japan and Australia unveiled a set of initiatives aimed at strengthening regional energy resilience, maritime security, critical mineral supply chains and port infrastructure.

The Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting, held amid rising geopolitical competition and growing concerns over economic and energy vulnerabilities, signalled a broader push to institutionalise cooperation in major sectors while ensuring the bloc doesn't get the label of a security alliance.

At the heart of the announcements was the launch of the Quad Initiative on Indo-Pacific Energy Security, a framework to deepen cooperation in energy technology, policy coordination, and emergency response.

A joint statement said the initiative would seek to "recognize and leverage the unique resources and capabilities of each country's energy sector".

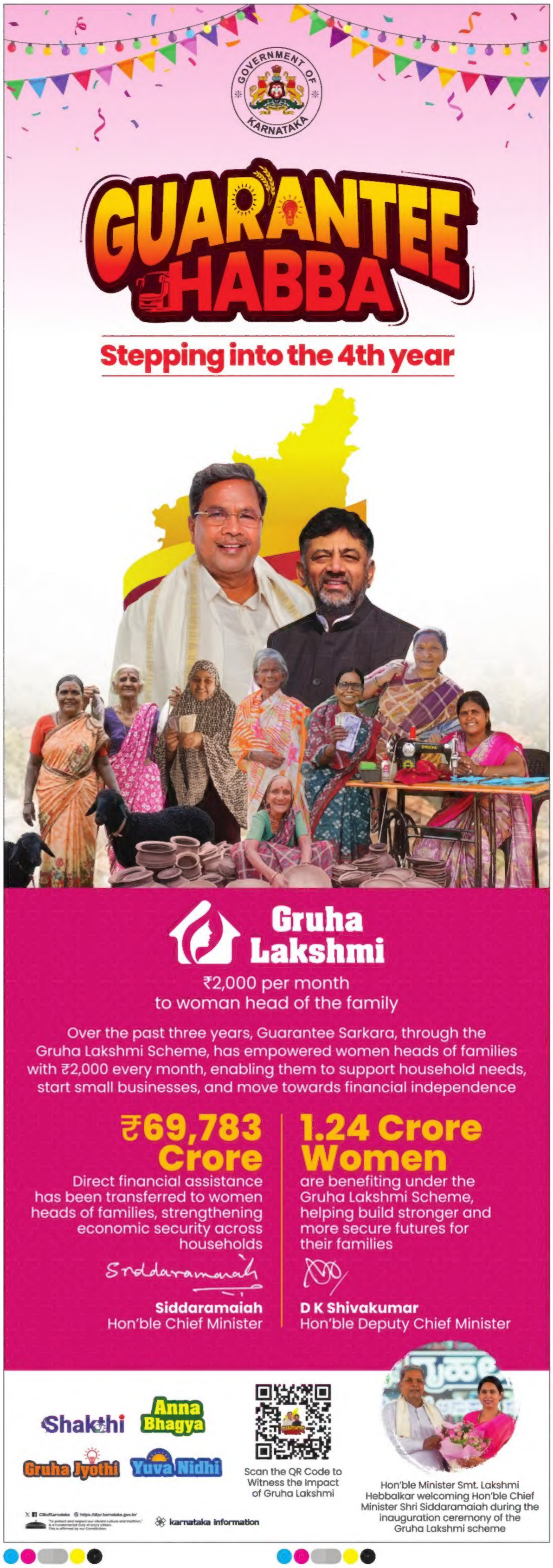
External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar described the discussions as "substantive and productive," stressing the strategic importance of maritime collaboration among the four democracies. "Because we are four maritime democracies located at different ends of the Indo-Pacific, the exchange of perspectives was an exercise of considerable value," Jaishankar said after the meeting.

The broad package of initiatives reflects the Quad's evolving role into a platform for strategic economic coordination, resilience-building and infrastructure development across the Indo-Pacific.

EXPRESS READ

Suspected Ebola case in city, Ugandan woman in isolation

Bengaluru: A suspected Ebola case has been reported in Bengaluru with a 28-year-old woman from Uganda placed under treatment with symptoms of the viral infection. The woman had arrived in the city on May 23 and was staying at a private hotel. Health officials shifted her to the Epidemic Diseases Hospital for isolation, treatment and observation | **P3**


GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
GUARANTEE HABBA
Stepping into the 4th year
Gruha Lakshmi
₹2,000 per month
to woman head of the family
Over the past three years, Guarantee Sarkara, through the Gruha Lakshmi Scheme, has empowered women heads of families with ₹2,000 every month, enabling them to support household needs, start small businesses, and move towards financial independence
₹69,783 Crore
Direct financial assistance has been transferred to women heads of families, strengthening economic security across households
Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister
1.24 Crore Women
are benefiting under the Gruha Lakshmi Scheme, helping build stronger and more secure futures for their families
D K Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
Shakthi
Anna Bhagya
Gruha Jyothi
Yuva Nidhi
Scan the QR Code to Witness the Impact of Gruha Lakshmi
karnataka information
Hon'ble Minister Smt. Lakshmi Hebbalkar welcoming Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Siddaramaiah during the inauguration ceremony of the Gruha Lakshmi scheme